period before user-selected information is retrieved. In one such embodiment, a qualifying

provider-selected HTTP message includes HTML and javascript which causes the provider-

selected HTML to be displayed for a limited period, after which time the browser

automatically requests the originally sought user-selected information from the provider's

server, using the HTTP POST request method. The provider's server transmits user-selected

information only in response to such a request using the POST method, and which in

addition includes a referrer header indicating that the referrer a URL for a qualifying

provider-selected message. In combination with a qualification condition requiring, for

example, that the last provider-selected message have been received within the last one-half

hour, this embodiment would permit the provider to ensure that the user received and

displayed a fifteen second commercial message during each half hour that the user requested

information.

We claim:

1.   A method of delivering information across a computer network, comprising the steps

of:

        receiving a request from a client program for user-selected information;

        transmitting provider-selected information in response to the request if no qualifying

provider-selected message has been previously transmitted to the client program.

2.   An apparatus for delivering information across a computer network, comprising:

        a computer network;

an information server for receiving a request for user-selected information from a

client program;

the server being configured to transmit provider-selected information in response to

the request if no qualifying provider-selected message has been previously transmitted to the

client program.

3.   A method of delivering information across a computer network, comprising the steps

of:

receiving a request from a client program for user-selected information;

transmitting provider-selected information in response to the request if no qualifying

provider-selected message has been transmitted to the client program within at least one

provider-selected interval.

4.   An apparatus for delivering information across a computer network, comprising:

at computer network;

an information server for receiving a request for user-selected information from a

client program;

the server being configured to transmit provider-selected information in response to

the request if no qualifying provider-selected message has been previously transmitted to the

client program within at least one provider-selected interval.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein

said request from a client program is by means of the Hypertext Transport Protocol.

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6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting the user-selected information if a qualifying provider-selected message

has been previously transmitted to the client program.

7.   A method of delivering information across a computer network, comprising the steps

of:

receiving a request from a client program for user-selected information;

transmitting provider-selected information in response to the request if no qualifying

provider-selected message has been previously transmitted to the client program;

the provider-selected information causing the client program to transmit a second

request for user-selected information.

8.   An apparatus for delivering information across a computer network, comprising:

a computer network;

an information server for receiving a request for user-selected information from a

client program;

the server being configured to transmit provider-selected information in response to

the request if no qualifying provider-selected message has been previously transmitted to the

client program;

the provider-selected information causing the client program to transmit a second

request for user-selected information.

9.   The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of:

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transmitting the requested user-selected information in response to the second request for user-selected information.

10.   A method of delivering information across a computer network, comprising the steps of:

receiving an HTTP GET request from a client program for user-selected information;

transmitting from a server a provider-selected message in response to the HTTP GET request;

the provider-selected message causing the client program to transmit an HTTP POST request;

transmitting the user-selected information in response to the HTTP POST request.

11.   The method of claim 10, wherein:

wherein said HTTP POST request includes a referrer header containing a URL for the server.

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